



The Voice of Heritage

NEWSLETTER NO 11

HISTORIC PLACES AOTEAROA

You will see that we now have a new logo.

At the Annual General Meeting we voted to join Historic Places Aotearoa. This is the national organisation set up in 2012 to replace branch committees when Heritage New Zealand disestablished them. This will give us an opportunity to work with a wider range of organisations. HPA now represents twenty [most] of the former Historic Places Trust branches in NZ.

You can find out more at <http://historicplacesaotearoa.org.nz/>. We will keep our website <http://www.historicmanawatuhorowhenua.org.nz/> and there will be a link to the HPA website.

Unfortunately this will mean an increase of \$10 in our subscriptions. However as the subscriptions for 2017-18 were set at the 2016 AGM we will pay the first year's subscription out of our funds so there is no initial cost to members.

LOCAL HISTORY WEEK

Celebrating Palmerston North's railway past

Our society contributed this year to Local History Week with a lunch-time walk celebrating Palmerston North's railway history, taken by Cindy Lilburn. Some twenty people took the opportunity to stroll Main Street between the Square and Cook Street which once was dominated by railway yards.

Palmerston North became the major railway junction in the 1880s between Taranaki and Hawkes Bay, and for all trains heading north and south. For over 70 years Palmerstonians endured trains cutting through the centre of town, and three city blocks

just south of the Square devoted to the rail trade. What with smell, soot and noise many hours of the day, the many little sheds and bare shingle of the yards, it was hardly a glamorous look for this city.

Our walk began at the Masonic Hotel, the earliest built in 1891 to service railway passengers, then towards the Square where the first railway station of the 1880s once stood, pausing to argue where the former subway at Pitt Street once was. The Masonic stood directly opposite the railway station. The station was never an architectural masterpiece but in its time was a hive of activity with over twenty-five passenger trains each day passing through seven days a week [and passengers snatching meals at its refreshment rooms]. At the other, Cook Street end, was a complex of work buildings for the many NZR workers, the loco sheds and turntable, and most memorably a long rickety footbridge for locals across the tracks.

In 1963 the long-planned railway deviation was finally built, taking the train tracks out of the city to Tremaine Avenue. Three city blocks became vacant land, and over the next forty-five years Palmerston North has argued what to do with the bounty. The block closest to the Square has been filled with civic buildings such as the Convention Centre and Art Gallery. That furthest was infilled with the Warehouse in 2003, and in-between has been kept, after public protest, as a green space.

Though little may be seen of the railway yards today, there are many photographs to bring them alive, and the yards deserve commemoration as an essential part of this city's history.



Palmerston North Railway Station and Yards c 1906.

Manawatu Heritage, 2007N_Rm8_RAI_0668

Researching your House

Thirty-four people attended this workshop, organised by Cindy and held at Te Manawa, It offered an excellent introduction to the many archival resources for beginners and more experienced researchers. Speakers and topics included:

- Alison Dangerfield, Heritage NZ – reading the architecture and features of your house
- Jonathan Newport, Archives NZ – introduction to land ownership files and the many resources at Archives NZ: government files, maps, plans and photographs
- Joan McCracken, National Library – pictorial resources of the National Library – photos, maps, plans, architectural plans
- Emerson Vandy, National Library – Papers Past and other useful databases
- Lesley Courtney, Palmerston North City Archives – case study of researching a local house using local library and archive resources.



Emerson Vandy talking about PapersPast

Photo: David Watt

Our thanks go to Heritage New Zealand and David Watt for the original idea and for their support. We are also grateful to the Palmerston North City Library for their sponsorship of the venue and publicity of the event. One attendee left saying gleefully: “So many places to look things up!”

We note with sadness the recent death of Johan Bonnevie, an early long-serving member of the Manawatu Historic Places Trust committee. Norwegian-born and former principal of Intermediate Normal School, Johan embraced exploring the heritage of this country with enthusiasm; he was fluent in Māori. His translation from Norwegian of *Johanna's World*, the story of a pioneer Norwegian settler in Norsewood, is still a best seller. With the passing of fellow local historians, Ian Matheson, Jim Lundy and Brian Mather, it marks the end of an era.

REPORT FROM THE AGM 2017

About 25 people attended the AGM which was as usual held at Caccia Birch. We ran into a problem as Ben Schrader, the advertised speaker, was unwell. However Margaret Tennant came to our rescue and at very little notice spoke about Education in Palmerston North. Thank you Margaret!

Cindy Lilburn, our chairwoman, spoke about work undertaken during the year. This included:

- Assistance with the work that led up to the re-dedication of the World War I Medical Corps Memorial at the Awapuni racecourse late last year. This memorial is now a Category One structure on the Heritage NZ Register.
- We attended the announcement at Feilding by Maggie Barry, Minister for Culture and Heritage, of the new Heritage EQUIP fund, which will assist private owners of heritage buildings with earthquake strengthening. At only some \$1.5 million nation-wide it is a case of a little having to go a long way. Edwardian Feilding would however make an excellent advertisement for the government's scheme – if it can get in fast enough.
- In 2016 we made a grant of \$250 towards the restoration of Charles McKenzie's grave at Terrace End Cemetery, Charles being one of the first Europeans buried in Palmerston North.
- The Hoffman Kiln Trust has made excellent progress on readying this Category I structure for public access, including the installation of electricity inside. Planned over this coming year is signage on the history of the kiln. Given some thirty years' commitment to preservation of the kiln, we will assist financially and have also offered to write the text for the panels. We now have a member, Don Irvine, on the Hoffman Kiln Trust.

- Two well-attended bus trips this year saw us first visit Bulls [the house, Lethenty and the Bulls Museum] followed by the historic sites such as Wheriko Church between Bulls and the coast down the Parawanui Road. Our thanks go to guide Jane Russell Bowen, whose local connections gave us access to several sites on private property.
- Our second trip, to Whanganui ,was organized by committee member, Ian Robertson, visiting the Quaker Settlement built in the 1970s, and the Sisters of St Mary with their homestead and museum-archive. Those on the trip would agree that it was a fascinating day, a view of the heritage of two religious communities. We also visited the tram museum and Ian who is an accredited driver took us for a short jaunt on the tram.
- .It would be fair to say the earthquake-prone buildings Act must consume much of our time in the next five years. In force since July this year, the law will give these buildings 2 ½ years for engineering assessment and seven years for remediation or demolition. It endangers the many unreinforced masonry buildings pre-1935 that make up Feilding and Foxton but also many as young as the 1950s. This committee has been in liaison with the three local Councils which will administer this law. The Manawatu District Council is well ahead in their thinking on the new law and its implications for Edwardian Feilding. Our committee had a useful meeting in March with the Council's CEO and Mayor re earthquake strengthening, which has seen two of our committee members, Don Irvine and John Logan, now serve on a working party of local business people and interested citizens. Our enquiries of the Palmerston North City and Horowhenua District Council find they have identified earthquake prone buildings in their areas, some 240 each. The Councils are as yet to discuss the implications and what assistance they may have to provide. Given Foxton has a wealth of heritage buildings on its main street, we will need to liaise strongly with Horowhenua in the future.

HPMH COMMITTEE

Chair: Cindy Lilburn, cindy.lilburn@xtra.co.nz; secretary: Cushla Scrivens, scrivens@inspire.net.nz; treasurer: Bill Bendall; committee: David Chapple, Don Irvine, John Logan, Pauline Knuckey, Ian Robertson, Margaret Tate, Margaret Tennant, Robyn Wilson.

The committee wishes you the compliments of the season.